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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 001070

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: DIYALA: OPPOSITION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO BLOCK  
SEATING NEW GOVERNOR

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 981

[1](#)B. B) BAGHDAD 1011

Classified By: Deputy Political Counselor John G. Fox for Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

This is a PRT Diyala message.

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Political maneuvering continues in Diyala after the election of a new Provincial Council Chairman and Governor. Despite the walkout of 12 Council Members during the April 11 Council session at which the leadership was elected, the Provincial Council is still negotiating with the opposition and offering it the final available leadership position. An April 19 session of the PC failed to resolve the issue. The leader of the provincial opposition is still seeking to undermine or roll back the selections made on April 11, and the Prime Minister,s Diyala Representative is cautiously tolerant of a governing coalition made up of parties that often quarrel with the PM on national-level issues. In its own strange way, the wrangling reflects a normalization of Diyala politics. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) Since the April 11 session of the Provincial Council, at which a new Diyala Provincial Council Chairman and Governor were selected, PRT Diyala has held a series of meetings with key leaders. PRT met with the Prime Minister, s Representative in Diyala, Saad Chalub (Dawa), on April 14. On April 15, PRT held separate meetings with newly elected Provincial Council Chairman Abd-al Talib Muhammad Hasan (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan ) PUK) and with former Governor and the leader of the opposition within the Council, former governor Abdallah al Jabouri (Iraqi National List).

PC Chairman Moving Ahead

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[1](#)3. (C) Newly elected Provincial Council Chairman Abd-al Talib Muhammad Hasan, told PRT on April 15 that he had just drafted a memorandum seeking approval of the newly elected Governor from the Presidential Council. Talib had just given the memo to Diyala,s Chief Judge Jado,a for review and planned to forward it to Baghdad the next day. The transfer of power will be organized as soon as the approval is received. (Note: (U) According to the Provincial Elections Law, newly elected governors assume their power once a presidential decree formally appointing the governor is issued. This must be done within 15 days of the governor's election. End note)

[1](#)4. (C) According to Talib, the remaining Deputy Governor position would have been given to a member of the opposition parties if they, or even the National Dialogue Front, had agreed on a single candidate. (Note: We had the impression at the April 11

session that the opposition coalition, led by former governor Abdullah Al Jabouri (which party?), expected to have the support of the National Diyala Coalition (Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, ISCI) and had planned for the division of seats offered by a Tawafuq-led coalition. End note)

#### Prime Minister,s Office Accepting Results for Now

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15. (C) The Prime Minister,s Representative, Saad Chalub commented that, while a government had been formed, he was concerned that the government was not more representative of the people. Chalub stated that the decision to form the governing coalition had been made in Baghdad and reflected the well known national coalition among the Kurds, Tawafuq and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). He lamented that the position of Second Deputy Governor would have been insufficient for a group such as the National Dialogue Front, which enjoyed significant support, and complained that the Supreme Council, which received two leadership positions, represented only a small portion of the Shia community and had won only two seats on the Provincial Council. He did acknowledge that one reason the provincial opposition could not accept the positions on offer was the number of disparate parties and demands within that opposition.

16. (C) Chalub promised that funding from the Central Government would be based on the needs of the people of the province and the Provincial Council's

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effectiveness in meeting those needs, rather than on political considerations. He did warn that the Central Government would be less eager to provide support should Diyala,s Provincial Government act in a sectarian fashion: e.g. if there was corruption in spending or purges of Shia government staff. Regarding the execution of warrants for members of the Provincial Council (and other leading politicians), Chalub stuck to his earlier stance that such arrests are part of a judicial process separate from politics. (Note: On April 8, Chalub had denied knowledge of statements by the Prime Minister that the warrants would not be executed and failed to acknowledge that the execution of warrants was an executive function. We had separate reports that the police checkpoints in Diyala still had orders from the Provincial Director of Police to arrest the Provincial Council members some days after the Prime Minister,s decision was made. Still, no arrests have been made so far).

#### Former Governor al Jabouri Still Challenging the Results

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17. (C) Former Governor Abdallah al Jabouri, the leader of the local Iraqi National List and more broadly of the opposition that walked out of the PC meeting on April 11, is desperately seeking a way to overturn the leadership elections. Before the elections, al Jabouri tried until the last minute to cobble together an alternative coalition excluding Tawafuq. Al Jabouri claims that he was defeated only through bribery and intimidation: that the two ISCI members had been in his camp as recently as the evening of April 10 and that Jalil Ibrahim Mamud, the sole Kurdish Democratic Party Council Member, had received death threats should he break ranks with the PUK.

18. (C) Al Jabouri told us that the decision of ISCI, Tawafuq and the PUK to ally was made in Baghdad under the influence of Iran and that the new coalition is a continuation of the same corrupt parties in power. Al Jabouri was critical of the U.S. for "supporting and protecting" the Tawafuq Council members against whom arrest warrants have been issued. Although he has little faith in

the Iraqi judiciary, al Jabouri and some other members of the opposition have filed a suit in court in Baghdad (he did not specify which court) charging that the Provincial Council's selection of Diyala's new governor and his first deputy did not follow proper procedure. In particular, al Jabouri charges that Diyala's opposition parties did not receive advance notification that the April 11 session would elect the governor and the first Deputy Governor in addition to the Provincial Council Chairman and his Deputy. Al Jabouri told us that the Council should have waited to elect the Governor until a subsequent session. He acknowledged that opposition members could play a constructive role within the Council, but remains inclined to boycott if the opposition parties do not receive adequate positions and the chairmanships of some key committees.

¶9. (C) Saja Qadoori, a former Provincial Council member (Dawa Party) who failed to win re-election on the State of Law Coalition ticket, told U.S. representatives last week that the minority coalition is threatening to petition Baghdad for an emergency takeover of the Provincial Government by the national government. She claimed that this is legal if over 38 per cent of the council requests it prior to the seating of the new governor. (Note: According to the Provincial Powers Law, one-third of the PC can vote to dissolve the Council at any time (not just Qcan vote to dissolve the Council at any time (not just before the seating of the Governor). There is, however, no provision for an "emergency takeover" by the central government. End note) Whether Saja's interpretation of the law is correct or not, her pursuit of an emergency takeover may be encouraging some opposition party members to wait and see what happens instead of moving ahead and participating more actively in the Provincial Council and its deliberations on the formation of Diyala's next government.

¶10. (C) The April 19 meeting of the Provincial Council produced little progress on the selection a second deputy governor due to a boycott of the meeting by some of the 12 opposition members. Shortly before the opening of the meeting, all 12 opposition members walked out of the PC meeting chamber. All but five, however, returned after lunch. Among those missing was opposition leader al Jabouri. PC Chairman Talib warned that the governing coalition was losing patience and was not required to give a significant post to the opposition parties. Tawafuq floor leader Abd al Jabbar complained that the opposition parties had organized a protest outside the

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PC with two banners that claimed that Iraqi Islamic Party (the leading party in The Tawafuq coalition) had an evil plot in Diyala. He angrily demanded an apology from the opposition parties; they refused. After very heated debate, the PC decided to postpone selecting the Second Deputy Governor until April 21.

COMMENT

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¶11. (C) The PRT will continue to encourage all factions to engage constructively in the political process through established political institutions. The fact that neither the governing coalition nor the opposition has been drawn together on sectarian grounds (as for example was the case in Ninewa) provides grounds for hope, although the possibility of tension with the Central Government remains a concern.

¶12. (C) All our interlocutors noted the role that Baghdad politicians were playing in dictating coalitions at the local level -- at least in influencing their political opponents. They all made explicit comparisons with other

provinces attempting to form provincial governments, with the consensus being that the challenges facing Diyala were no greater than those of other provinces. In their different ways, these are both indications of a normalization, i.e., that politics in Diyala are not exceptional. What is notable about Diyala is how it, and its Provincial Council, serve as a microcosm for national politics. END COMMENT.  
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